



## How Can We Decrease Childhood Overweight in Utah?

In 2006, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. released the *Utah Blueprint to Promote Healthy Weight in Children, Youth, and Adults*. The goal and objectives below are taken from that document. The document is available at <http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity/docs/obesityblueprint.pdf>.

### **GOAL: Utah's mass media (local broadcasters and news media) will assume an active role in addressing childhood overweight.**

**Objective 1: Increase the level of knowledge of the mass media's potential role(s) in addressing overweight/obesity prevention.**

- Educate Utah's mass media leaders and share best practices and ideas.
- Obtain and disseminate materials and information developed by other media markets to Utah's mass media.



**Objective 2: Increase participation by Utah's mass media in public awareness and education campaigns in order to increase awareness of the seriousness of the obesity epidemic and to improve eating and physical activity patterns in Utah.**

- Establish a team of Utah media executives who will work with health and social marketing experts to develop a set of consistent and complementary messages.
- Develop innovative strategies to secure and share funding to run messages.
- Secure funding and implement media campaign(s).
- Evaluate success of campaigns (awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and actions).

**Objective 3: Begin a dialogue among Utah's mass media, the food industry, local media buyers, and local retailers about opportunities to increase the advertising and marketing of healthful foods and beverages directed at children, youth, and their parents.**

- Convene moderated forums of leaders of the above-mentioned groups to discuss opportunities and methods.
- Compile and disseminate a report of the forums' discussions.
- Conduct a follow-up meeting within one year with the leaders to determine what changes, if any, were made in messaging.

### **Examples of Success:**

**Baby Your Baby:** This program encourages women of child-bearing age to adopt healthy behaviors as a means to reduce infant mortality and low birth weight babies in Utah. Baby Your Baby has helped more than 100,000 Utah women get necessary prenatal care over the last 20 years and its public awareness campaigns have taught countless women how to better care for themselves and their babies. Baby Your Baby is a private/public partnership among the Utah Department of Health, Intermountain Healthcare and KUTV 2News.

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## Examples of Success (continued):

**Check Your Health:** This program uses television, radio, activities and the Internet to encourage Utahns of all ages to eat healthy and to be active. Check Your Health has sponsored activities like the *Get Active Utah! Fitness Challenge*, and produces the instructional *Workouts on the Web* as well as healthy cooking demonstrations. The program has created free publications such as *The Healthy Cook's Companion* and the *Nutrition and Activity Tracker*. The Web site and news programming offer information to Utahns of all ages on how to eat healthy and be active. Check Your Health is a private/public partnership among the Utah Department of Health, Intermountain Healthcare and KUTV 2News.

**Intermountain "LiVe":** This program encourages kids to get active. The LiVe campaign includes advertising, sponsorship of events that promote physical activity, school assemblies, new education materials for health providers, an interactive Web site, and informational offerings for kids, teens, and their parents. The LiVe Web site contains helpful materials for parents and children, as well as fun games that teach kids about living a healthy lifestyle. Posters and brochures can be downloaded and printed from the Web site.

**VERB:** VERB is a national, multicultural social marketing campaign coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The VERB campaign encourages young people ages 9–13 ('tweens) to be physically active every day. This Web site includes resources and information to make regular physical activity "cool" for tweens and a fun thing to do. There are also VERB materials for organizations that do not directly provide programs to 'tweens but can promote the importance of regular physical activity through communication, advocacy, policy change, and training of program providers.

### References:

- Bureau of Health Promotion. Tipping the Scales Toward a Healthier Population In Utah. Salt Lake City: Utah Department of Health 2005. Pages 23-24; Located at <http://health.utah.gov/obesity>.
- Preventing Childhood Overweight: Health in the Balance. Koplan, JP, Liverman, CT, and Kraak, VA, Editors, Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth. Institutes of Medicine of the National Academies, 2005.
- Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity. McGinnis, JM, Gootman, JA, Kraak, VL, Editors, Committee on Food Marketing and the Diets of Children and Youth Food and Nutrition Board, Board of Children, Youth, and Families. Institutes of Medicine of the National Academies, 2006.
- Committee on Public Education, 2000-2001 .Children, Adolescents, and Television. American Academy of Pediatrics 107(2):423-426.

### Resources:

- Obesity in Utah Web site. Located at [www.health.utah.gov/obesity](http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity).
- Kaiser Family Foundation Web site. The role of Media in Childhood Obesity. Located at <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia022404pkg.cfm>.
- Task Force on Media and Childhood Obesity. Federal Communications Commission. Located at <http://www.fcc.gov/obesity>.
- Krebs, NF, Jacobsen, MS, and the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Nutrition. (2003) Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity. *Pediatrics*. 112(2):424-430.
- Baby Your Baby Web site. Located at [www.babyyourbaby.org](http://www.babyyourbaby.org).
- Check Your Health Web site. Located at [www.checkyourhealth.org](http://www.checkyourhealth.org).
- Intermountain "LiVe" Web site. Located at <http://intermountainlive.org>.
- VERB Web site. Located at <http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/>.
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